

The United States is better and stronger as a result of Jewish people from around the world choosing to become American citizens. Jewish Americans made invaluable contributions to our Nation's labor movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Thousands of Jewish immigrants and their children who arrived in the United States during this time period earned their livings in sweatshops and factories in New York City, often working under horrific conditions. Many Jewish Americans played a key role in improving the working conditions for laborers, which led to collective bargaining and other advancements in the labor movement. Samuel Gompers, one of the founders and first president of the American Federation of Labor, earned his living in the crowded slums of New York as a cigar maker upon his arrival in the United States in 1863. Becoming highly skilled at his trade and earning the respect of his peers, he eventually moved up the ranks of the existing labor organization, transforming the structurally weak and ineffective Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Councils to the American Federation of Labor in 1886, which grew to represent over one million workers 6 years later.

Many individuals within the American Jewish community also made important contributions to the Civil Rights movement. Jewish philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, who funded dozens of primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges for black youth, led the Jewish community in contributing to some 2,000 schools for black Americans, including Howard, Dillard and Fisk universities. At one time, 40 percent of southern blacks were attending these schools. In addition, Jewish Americans like Abraham Joshua Heschel, a writer, rabbi and professor of theology at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America was outspoken on the subject of civil rights and marched arm-in-arm with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Selma. Professor Ernst Borinski, a refugee from the Holocaust who came to America to teach at Taugaloo University, organized dinners at which blacks and whites sat next to each other, a simple act challenging segregation. Joel Elias Spingarn, a Jewish-American educator and literary critic, was a founder and one of the first Jewish leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In 1913, as the organization's chairman of the board, he established the Spingarn medal, awarded annually for outstanding achievement by an African American. In addition, organizations such as the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, and Anti-Defamation League have actively promoted civil rights over the years.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that all Americans observe Jewish-American Heritage Month by initiating programs and activities that commemorate these and the many other significant contributions Jewish Americans have made throughout our Nation's history. Over the centuries, Jewish Americans have achieved great success in business, medicine, the arts, science and technology, and many other professions. These achievements have strengthened our country and helped shape our way of life. In their commitment to family, faith, and community, the Jewish people have made America a stronger and more democratic society.

AC TRANSIT VOTED THE "BEST OF THE BEST"

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Alameda County Transit Agency, AC Transit, headquartered in Oakland, California. For the sixth time in 9 years, AC Transit has been recognized as the Nation's most outstanding public bus agency at the American Public Transportation Association, APTA, meeting in Anaheim, California. At its annual "Bus Rodeo" in which bus operators and maintenance teams demonstrate their driving skills and knowledge, APTA has crowned AC Transit's drivers and mechanics as the "Best of the Best."

In addition AC Transit also won first place for its Customer Service in a special competition to evaluate bus operators' courtesy, patience and know-how.

The "Best of the Best" award came after grueling tests of competition involving more than 40 transit agencies with teams of drivers and mechanics from virtually every State in the country. Drivers were tested on their abilities to smoothly stop and maneuver their coaches in and out of tightly constricted spaces, avoiding mishaps and pedestrians. Mechanics were tested on their ability to quickly troubleshoot vehicle malfunctions by quickly diagnosing problems and instituting immediate repairs.

The competition is the "Super Bowl" for transit agencies, offering some of the world's top professionals an opportunity to display their driving skills, reflexes, judgment and superior workshop intelligence.

The "Best of the Best" designation represents the highest combined scores of the operator and maintenance team. AC Transit's team—operator Jesse Delacruz and mechanics, Carlos Leyva, Grant Pinkston and Donald Righter—was deemed number one in the Nation. AC Transit operator Patricia Lock won first place for Customer Service.

Congratulations to AC Transit on winning this prestigious "Best of the Best" award.

RECOGNIZING THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS STUDENTS OF AMERICA

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 30th anniversary of the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA).

HOSA is a national career and technical student organization endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education and the Health Occupations Education Division of the Association for Career and Technical Education. HOSA provides a unique program of leadership development, motivation, and recognition exclusively for middle school, secondary, postsecondary, adult and collegiate students.

HOSA is not a club to which a few students in school join. Rather, HOSA is a powerful instructional tool that works best when it is integrated into the health science curriculum and

classroom. Health Occupations instructors are committed to the development of the total person. Those who join the Health Science-HOSA Partnership recognize the importance of providing students with training far beyond the basic technical skills needed for entry into the health care field. The rapidly changing health care system needs dedicated workers who, in addition to their technical skills, are people-oriented and capable of playing a leadership role as a member of a health care team.

Nationally, HOSA has grown to over 78,000 members in almost every state, and soon, over 5,000 HOSA members will gather in Anaheim, California, for their annual leadership conference. This opportunity provides tours of health care facilities, exhibits presented by professional health care associates, as well as an Educational Symposium—workshops presented by professional partners that provide information about current health care issues.

The members of HOSA, through a student-led pipeline, are making a significant contribution to overcoming the shortage of health care workers in our country, guiding more than 1 million students into health professions. I am proud to say that the Florida HOSA has the fourth largest membership at more than 6,700 members.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Health Occupations Students of America on celebrating their 30th anniversary, and I wish them luck on their continued success.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PLUMBERS LOCAL UNION 210 GRADUATING CLASS OF 2006

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sincerity and respect that I offer congratulations of several of Northwest Indiana's most talented, dedicated, and hardworking individuals. On Friday, June 9, 2006, the Plumbers Local Union 210 will honor the graduating class of 2006 at the Annual Apprentice Graduation Banquet, which will be held at the Patio Banquet Hall in Merrillville, Indiana.

At this year's banquet, the Plumbers Local Union 210 will recognize and honor the 2006 Apprentice Graduates. The individuals who have completed the apprentice training in 2006 are: Nino Arredondo, Joseph Butcher, Robert DePyssler, Lloyd James, Jr., Michael Klaich, Todd Knight, Paul Lacy, William Lawrence, Eric Longoria, Milutin Miljus, Greg Monnier, Eugene Pazdur, Derrick Poper, Jason Powers, Luis Quintana, Sean Severson, Daniel Smith, Bertram Wagner, Adam Westlund, Robert White, and Raymond Zack.

Northwest Indiana has a rich history of excellence in its craftsmanship and loyalty by its tradesmen. These graduates are all outstanding examples of each. They have mastered their trade and have demonstrated their loyalty to both the union and the community through their hard work and selfless dedication.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in congratulating these dedicated and hardworking individuals. Along with the other men and women

of Northwest Indiana's unions, these individuals have committed themselves to making a significant contribution to the growth and development of the economy of the First Congressional District, and I am very proud to represent them in Washington, DC.

PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM
ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF
HON. JAMES P. MORAN
OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 22, 2006

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to voice my opposition to the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006.

Madam Speaker, this bill claims that its goal is to ensure that no United States funding goes to support Hamas, a foreign terrorist organization that has terrorized thousands and seeks the destruction of Israel. Were this what the bill in fact does, I would support it. However, the bill before us today goes much further than what is needed to achieve its stated goal.

First, H.R. 4681 severely restricts U.S. funding to the many non-governmental organizations that provide critical aid and services to the Palestinian people, and allows for such funding without a presidential waiver for the most basic of services, such as food and shelter. This serves no good purpose. Limiting NGO funding in this manner will only increase the hardship of the Palestinian people. Yes, it is possible that this increased hardship may drive Palestinians to turn against the Hamas-controlled Palestinian government. At the same time, however, the cause of this additional hardship—the termination in U.S. humanitarian aid—will provide a ready excuse to Hamas, allowing it to blame the United States, and others, for its failure. This is not in our interest.

We must not give this “out” to Hamas. Instead, we must ensure that, when Hamas fails in its attempt to govern, as it certainly will, it will not be able to blame the United States or any other party for its inability to deliver what the Palestinian people expected.

Second, restricting United States aid to NGOs in this manner will hurt the very people we should be assisting. The Palestinian people are facing an economic crisis that goes beyond basic food and shelter, and includes education, public health, economic development and physical infrastructure. It is in the United States' interest to provide such assistance if we are in fact in support of a two-state solution and peace in the Middle East.

Third, placing tight restrictions and sanctions on those parts of the Palestinian Authority that are not controlled by Hamas is a serious mistake, for it precludes our executive branch from working with governmental officials who may be viable options to Hamas. Other provisions in the bill—restricting the ability of all Palestinian Authority representatives to travel in the United States, interfering with the participation of Palestinian Authority representatives in international organizations, and refusing assistance to the Palestinian judiciary—are petty actions that will not, in any way, advance peace in the Middle East.

There is a high likelihood that as a result of this bill, Hamas and the Palestinian Authority

will turn around and seek the support from wealthy Arab and Muslim states, as well as extremist governments, like Iran and Syria. The message that this bill sends will push the Palestinian people away from us and quite possibly, the peace process. It will isolate them and force them to become more dependent on Hamas and their extremist supporters. This is not in our interest.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that the purpose of our every response to the Hamas electoral victory and to the fact that it now controls the Palestinian Authority must be (i) to deny any form of direct assistance until Hamas renounces its terrorist traditions and policy, (ii) to assist in the delivery of humanitarian aid and relief to the Palestinian people, and (iii) at least for as long as Hamas does not actively engage in or support violence, to refrain from any actions that will deepen the divide between the Palestinian people and this country, thereby allowing some room for progress to occur. The bill under consideration fails to meet two of these criteria. For these reasons, I will not support it.

PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM
ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF
HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 22, 2006

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4681, The Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006. This legislation promotes the development of democratic institutions in areas under the administrative control of the Palestinian Authority. It comes at a time when the demand for responsible democratic leadership is needed more than ever before in the Middle East. I am proud that I was one of 295 members to co-sponsor this legislation, which would restrict aid to the Hamas-controlled Palestinian Authority until Hamas meets a series of conditions, including renouncing terrorism and accepting Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

This legislation explicitly states that it shall be U.S. policy that no U.S. Government officer or employee shall negotiate or have substantive contacts with members or official representatives of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, or any other Palestinian terrorist organization, until such organization recognizes Israel's right to exist, and renounces the use of terrorism. Additionally, any Palestinian government must recognize and accept all previous Israel-PLO agreements and understandings.

Having taken over the government of the Palestinian Authority, PA, Hamas has reiterated its commitment to violence and the destruction of Israel by endorsing suicide attacks on Israelis and appointing a man connected to the murder of Americans in Gaza as the new PA Interior Minister. Hamas' continued dedication to terrorism has already prompted the United States and its allies to end nearly all aid to the PA, with exceptions for humanitarian assistance. However, this bill permits certain assistance to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in recognition of his commitment to a non-violent resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The internationally backed Roadmap for Peace requires that the Palestinian Authority launch “sustained, targeted, and effective operations aimed at confronting all those engaged in terror.” The Palestinian Authority cannot call for the destruction of Israel if it is ever to be a serious partner for peace.

Finally, the members of the Palestinian Authority must assure us that they are focused on a better future for the Palestinian people and in order to do so, they must take steps to recognize Israel and its right to exist. The Palestinian Authority must be pressured to realize, that a government that fails to condemn terrorism, or, states its commitment to eliminate a fellow member of the community of nations is a government that cannot be considered a serious partner for peace.

I strongly encourage my colleagues, to vote in support of H.R. 4681, The Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006.

PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM
ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF
HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 22, 2006

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4681 because it inappropriately uses a blunt instrument to clumsily attempt to achieve Middle East peace. If this carelessly written and unnecessary legislation becomes law, it will set the Israeli-Palestinian peace process back further and result in additional Israeli and Palestinian deaths.

H.R. 4681 weakens moderate pro-peace Palestinians. This legislation does not discriminate in imposing sanctions against both Hamas and non-Hamas controlled elements and officials of the Palestinian Authority, PA. H.R. 4681 bans all aid to the Palestinian Legislative Council, PLC, and PA agencies and instrumentalities, including those not controlled by Hamas. Among the officials this bill prohibits from receiving assistance is Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who has been instrumental in counterbalancing Hamas and working toward a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

This legislation undermines diplomatic efforts to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East. This bill prohibits all members of the PA regardless of their affiliation or non-affiliation with Hamas—from obtaining visas necessary for diplomatic travel. This ill-advised rule will prevent the United States from fully engaging and bolstering moderate Palestinian leaders who recognize and support peace with Israel.

Even as the United Nations reports of an impending humanitarian disaster in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, this bill imposes unnecessarily strict sanctions on providing aid to Palestinian groups and non-government organizations not affiliated with Hamas. Under this legislation, the Palestinian people could receive essential medicine, but funds for democracy assistance, economic development, and sanitation infrastructure would be prohibited. This legislation therefore makes more likely a humanitarian crisis that will increase support for extremism, thereby endangering Israel and further destabilizing the region.

H.R. 4681 also ties the President's hands in dealing with emergency security and humanitarian crises. The bill limits the President's